

Town Hall

Benton County Emergency Services

Justice(s) of the Peace:

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Disclaimer

- It makes the lawyers happy! 😊
- The author of this presentation is not a lawyer. Interpretations of the law are the author's opinion.
- All numbers, formulas, and most of the information in this presentation can be found on the Benton County website (<http://bentoncountyar.gov>). More specifically the Quorum Court Dashboard (<http://bentoncountyar.gov/Agency/Other/DashBoard.aspx>).
- Additional information may have come from discussion during Quorum Court or Committee meetings. As such, it is to the best recollection of the author. All meetings of the Quorum Court or its Committees are recorded. The recordings can be obtained from the County Clerk's Office.
- This presentation is not meant to advocate for or against the proposed ballot measures.

Agenda

- The Law
- The Issue
- Current EMS System
- Possible EMS System Configurations
- Proposed EMS Configuration
- Other EMS Configurations
- Proposed Solutions
- Other Solutions
- Ballot Measures
- After the General Election and into 2015
- Questions

The Law

- AR §14-266-105
 - (b)(2): A city regulating ambulance services...shall provide ambulance services to those surrounding areas whose governing bodies request and authorize those services but only if mutually agreeable contracts can be reached to provide those services.
 - (b)(3): All direct and indirect costs of extending those services shall be borne by the patient user fees or subsidies provided by the patient, municipality, or county to whom those services are rendered.
 - (b)(4): In no event shall the city extending ambulance services beyond its boundaries be required in any manner to subsidize or otherwise extend financial support to render those services.

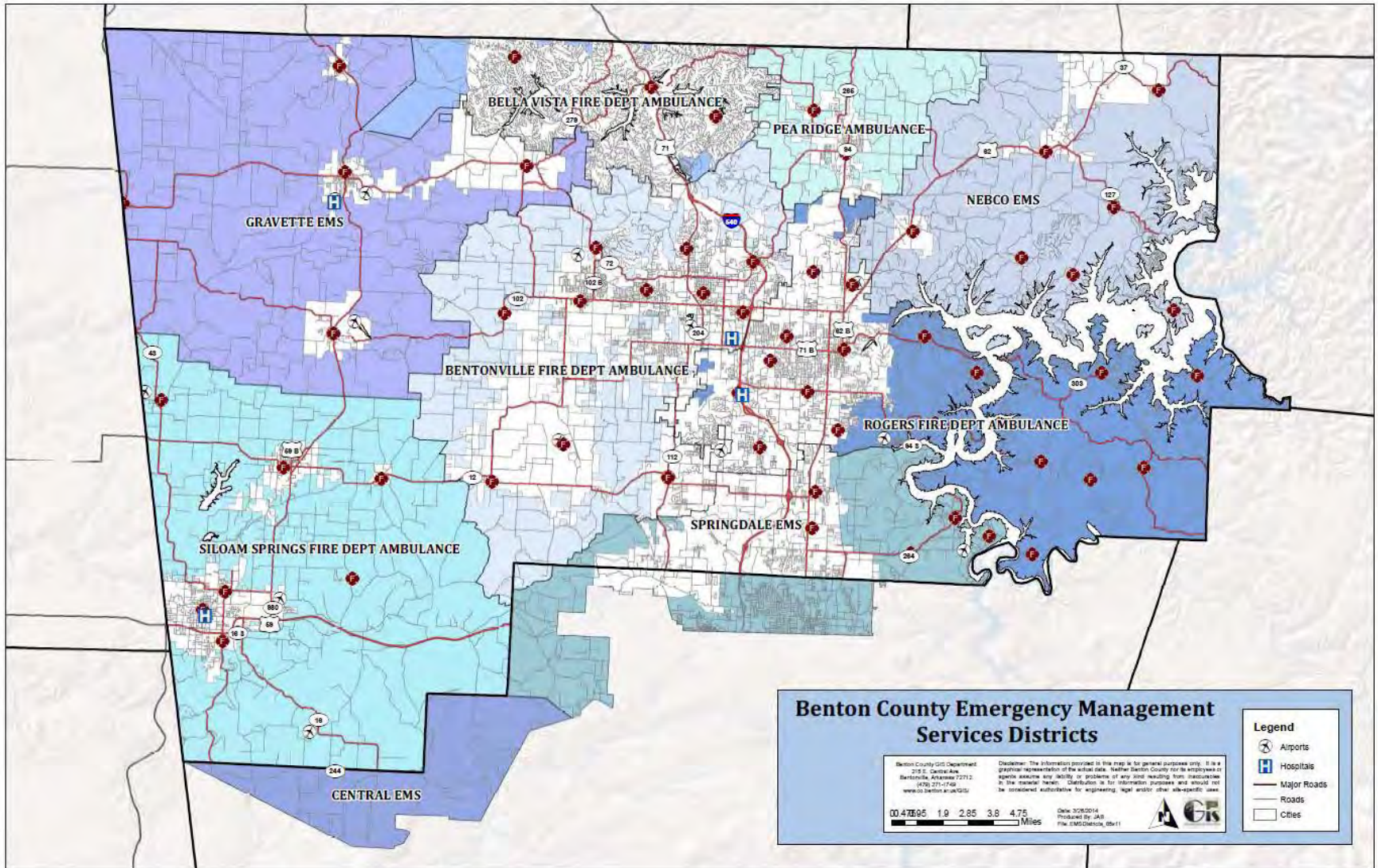
The Issue

- What it means:
 - Cities may provide ambulance service outside of corporate boundary
 - If services are contracted with the County, the City and County must have a mutually agreeable contract.
 - All costs to extend service must be provided by the patient fees and/or subsidies
 - The Cities cannot financially support extending services
- What it does not provide:
 - A formula to determine the cost of ambulance service
 - A clear definition of “direct or indirect costs”

Current EMS System

- No County-run ambulance service
- EMS Service to Unincorporated Benton County provided by 7 Cities and NEBCO:
 - Bella Vista, Bentonville, Gravette, NEBCO, Pea Ridge, Rogers, Siloam Springs, Springdale
 - See small map on next slide or larger map on wall

Current EMS Map



Current EMS System (History)

- Cities providing EMS outside incorporated boundaries
 - No subsidy requested from the County
 - Some Cities were adding a charge to the patient bill to help cover additional cost
- County must provide subsidy per Arkansas State Law §14-266-105.b:
 - 2011: \$100,000
 - 2012: \$150,000
 - 2013: \$300,000

Current EMS System (Numbers)

- 2014 subsidy: \$942K
 - 2014 subsidy is paid from reserves (with offset from personnel)
- Projected Number of Calls: ~2500
- Projected Number of Transports: ~1900

Entity	Calls	Transports	Subsidy
Bella Vista	79	47	\$10,000
Bentonville	240	187	\$60,000
Gravette	400	308	\$73,000
NEBCO	409	295	\$97,000
Pea Ridge	219	166	\$90,000
Rogers	495	413	\$209,000
Siloam Springs	430	275	\$334,000
Springdale	191	169	\$69,000

Subsidy Analysis: Gravette

- 1054 total calls, 744 total EMS, 364 Rural EMS
- 2013 Gravette Fire Department Budget: \$387,928
 - $744 / 1054 = 70\%$ EMS calls
 - $\$387,928 * 0.70 = \$217,549.60$
- 2013 Gravette EMS Budget: \$217,549.60
 - $364 / 744 = 49\%$ Rural EMS calls
 - $\$217,549.60 * 0.49 = \$133,059.30$
- 2013 Gravette Rural EMS Budget: \$133,059.30
 - Gravette estimates that they subsidize their Fire and EMS at 50%
 - $\$133,059.30 * 0.50 = \$66,529.50$
- 2013 Gravette subsidy: \$66,529.50
- Gravette estimates 10% increase based on cost and calls
 - $\$66,529.50 * 1.10 = \$73,182.45$
- 2014 Subsidy Request: \$73K

Subsidy Analysis: Rogers

- Requesting a phased approach towards \$317,125 in 2015
- Rogers projects that an additional ambulance will be required in order to properly respond to all EMS calls in Rogers and Rural area covered by Rogers
- Total Compensation for entry level FF/EMT in Rogers: \$48,687.50
- 6 FF/EMTs are required to staff an ambulance 24/7/365
 - $6 * \$48,687.50 = \$292,125$
- Additional request of \$25,000 per year towards ambulance replacement
 - $\$292,125 + \$25,000 = \$317,125$
- Subsidy request:
 - 2014: \$209,302
 - 2015: \$317,125

Subsidy Analysis: Siloam Springs

- 2014 Budget: \$3,048,610
- 80% of calls are for EMS
 - $\$3,048,610 * 0.8 = \$2,438,888$
- EMS Revenue: \$480,576
 - Siloam Springs is subsidizing ambulance service from their general fund and other dedicated city taxes at 84%.
- Siloam Springs Subsidy from General: \$1,958,312
 - $\$2,438,888 - \$480,576 = \$1,958,312$
- 2290 totals calls
 - $\$1,958,312 / 2290 = \855.16 per call
- 391 calls to Unincorporated Benton County:
 - $391 * \$855.16 = \$334,367.56$
- 2014 Subsidy Request: \$334,367.56

Possible EMS Configurations

- Current System
 - Continue subsidy to Cities and NEBCO
- County Run System
 - Unincorporated Area Only
 - Incorporated and Unincorporated Areas
 - Similar to Central EMS in Washington County
 - There are several ways to implement this:
 - County-run
 - Contract EMS out to some other Entities
 - Private EMS providers
 - Rural Fire Departments
 - Public Utility Model
 - An amalgam of County-run / Private / PUM

Proposed EMS Configurations

- Stay with current system and utilize existing Entities with existing EMS infrastructure to provide EMS service to the unincorporated areas of Benton County.
- Subsidy:
 - 2014: \$942,000 (\$942K)
 - 2015: \$1,100,000 (\$1.1M)
 - 2016: \$1,160,000 (\$1.16M)

Other EMS Configurations

- More detailed information about different types of EMS configurations can be found in the ambulance study.
- All other configurations have been discussed and deemed not viable by the Quorum Court at this time.
- Budget overview of County Run (for reference):
 - Startup Capital (Vehicles): \$816,000
 - Startup Capital (Buildings): ???
 - Startup Equipment: \$340,000
 - Operational: \$1,969,913
 - Total Startup: \$3,125,913 + \$ for Buildings
 - Ambulances maintenance and replacement
 - Replace chassis @ 5 years and 10 years, \$75K to replace chassis
 - Replace entire unit @ 15 years
- The County will continue to review options in order to provide adequate Ambulance service at the lowest possible cost to Benton County Citizens.

Proposed Solutions

- 2013 EMSD w/ \$85 Fee
 - Enacted by Quorum Court
 - Failed by Referendum
- 2014 EMSD, Max \$40 Fee
 - November 2014 Ballot Measure
- 2014 Millage, Max 0.2 mills
 - November 2014 Ballot Measure
- Voluntary Tax

2013 EMSD w/ \$85 Fee

- Enacted by Quorum Court as per State law
- Unincorporated area only
 - Excluding NEBCO EMSD
- Failed by referendum in February 2014
- Would have placed \$85 Fee on property tax bill.
- Projected revenue: ~\$1.2M

2014 EMSD: \$40 Fee

- Referred to 2014 General Election
- Unincorporated area only
 - Excluding NEBCO EMSD
- Would place \$40 fee on property tax bill.
- The QC can reduce the fee in any year.
- The QC cannot increase the fee above \$40 without a vote of the People.
- Projected revenue: ~\$528K

2014 Millage: 0.2 mills

- Referred to 2014 General Election
- Entire County
- Increase the County millage by 0.2 mills.
- Property tax increase of \$4 for every \$100,000 in property value.
- QC can reduce the millage in any year.
- QC cannot increase the millage above 0.2 mills without a vote of the People.
- Projected revenue: ~\$834K

Voluntary Tax

- Place a voluntary tax of 0.2 mills on property tax bill
- Completely voluntary
- Projected revenue: ~\$200,000
- Revenue through 9/12/14: \$128,085.65

Other Solutions

- County sales tax
 - General
 - Dedicated
- Property tax millage via an Improvement District in Unincorporated Benton County
- Use County general fund

Other Solutions: Sales Tax

- 1/8¢ County wide sales tax
 - Dedicated
 - Revenue: ~\$4,500,000
 - All revenue must be spent on EMS service
 - General
 - Revenue:
 - County: \$912,000
 - Cities: \$3,634,137
 - The County receives 20.061% of non-dedicated sales tax

Other Solutions: Imp District

- This is a hybrid of the fee and millage proposals
 - Only the Improvement District would have additional property tax
- Problems with implementation for this type of ID
 - Boundary of the ID must line up with precinct boundaries
 - Precincts are not always on the same boundary as the Incorporated / Unincorporated boundary
 - To change precincts requires several months, wherein no elections can be held
 - The Quorum Court is working with the State Legislators from Benton County to change this implementation issue. If a change does occur, it is likely 1-2 years away from being usable by the County.

Other Solutions: County General

- Net 2014 Projected Revenue: \$31.55M
- Unrestricted Reserves (7/1/2014): \$12.69M
- Largest budgets within General Fund:
 - Sheriff: \$8.5M
 - Jail: \$7.5M
 - CenCom: \$1.7M
 - Prosecuting Atty: \$1.66M
 - Maintenance: \$1.47M
 - Info Systems: \$1.38M
 - County Clerk: \$1.09M
 - Juvenile Detention: \$1.08M
 - Accounting/HR: \$984K
 - Juvenile Probation: \$963K
 - County Judge: \$692K
 - Fire Services: \$664K
 - Co Clerk Election: \$471K
 - Environ Services: \$412K
 - **Subtotal: \$28.57M**
- \$3M to run 17 different departments, including:
 - 6 Circuit Courts
 - Coroner
 - Veterans Services
 - County Agent
- Where do we cut the County budget \$1.1M to fund ambulance service?

Ballot Measures

- Ballot Titles:
 - Millage
 - Referred Ordinance No. 1
 - AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AN AMBULANCE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT CO-EXTENSIVE WITH THE BOUNDARIES OF BENTON COUNTY, ESTABLISHING IN THE QUORUM COURT THE AUTHORITY TO LEVY UP TO TWO-TENTHS (0.2) MILLS TO FUND SUCH DISTRICT'S OPERATIONS, REFERRING THE MATTER TO THE ELECTORS OF THE DISTRICT AT THE NOVEMBER 4, 2014 GENERAL ELECTION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
 - FOR PROPOSED REFERRED ORDINANCE NO. 1
 - AGAINST PROPOSED REFERRED ORDINANCE NO. 1
 - Fee
 - Referred Ordinance No. 2
 - AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE DISTRICT FOR THE UNINCORPORATED PORTION OF BENTON COUNTY NOT CURRENTLY PART OF THE NORTHEAST BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE DISTRICT, ESTABLISHING THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE DISTRICT, ESTABLISHING FEES TO FUND THE DISTRICT, INCLUDING A \$40.00 PER HOUSEHOLD FEE, PROVODING THAT THE PER HOUSEHOLD FEE CANNOT BE INCREASED WITHOUT A VOTE OF THE PEOPLE PROVIDING FOR THE PER HOUSEHOLD FEES TO BE INCLUDED ON THE TAX BILLS OF RESIDENTS OF THE DISTRICT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
 - FOR PROPOSED REFERRED ORDINANCE NO. 2
 - AGAINST PROPOSED REFERRED ORDINANCE NO. 2

Ballot Measures

- What will you see on the Ballot?
 - Live in an Incorporated City:
 - Millage (Referred Ordinance No. 1)
 - Live in Unincorporated Benton County:
 - Millage (Referred Ordinance No. 1)
 - Fee (Referred Ordinance No. 2)
 - Live in NEBCO EMSD:
 - Millage (Referred Ordinance No. 1)
- See copies of Sample Ballots

Post Election & 2015

- Millage and Fee approved
- Millage or Fee approved
- Millage and Fee defeated

Millage and Fee Approved

- The County has the ability to collect both the \$40 fee and the 0.2 mill property tax.
- Total revenue would be ~\$1,362,000 (\$1.36M).
- This would exceed the amount of projected subsidy requests.
- The excess money could not be used on anything but the stated purpose in the ordinance. Namely, ambulance service in Benton County.
- The Quorum Court has stated that it would set the millage, fee, or both lower than approved in order to not receive excess revenue on a yearly basis.

Millage or Fee Approved

- The County would use the method approved by the voters to offset the cost of subsidizing ambulance service in Unincorporated Benton County.
- The offset from County would be between \$300,000 and \$600,000, depending upon which method was approved.

Millage and Fee Defeated

- The full subsidy would need to be taken out of the Benton County general fund.
- This would remove \$1.1 Million from the budget.
- This would affect the operations of the County in many ways.